

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL NORWALK CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON 4-30-15
(abridged for publication)

Mayor Tom Phillips called City Council meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. Present at roll call: Tom Greteman, Kyle Jackson and Jaki Livingston. Absent: Erika Isley and Eric Delker. (RC = roll call vote)

15-066 Livingston moved, Jackson seconded to approve **agenda**. Voice vote carried unanimously.

15-067 Greteman moved, Livingston seconded to adopt **Resolution No. 0430-15-039 accepting public infrastructure for the subdivision of The Estates at the Ridge**. RC vote passed unanimously.

Additional discussions included: **CIAC Presentations** regarding infrastructure and public safety recommendations; comprehensive **bike trail** map; **Mission, Vision and Values** statements; and **Fire Department Staffing** plan.

15-068 Livingston moved, Greteman seconded to **adjourn** at 7:44 p.m. Voice vote carried unanimously.

Tom Phillips, Mayor

Attest:

Marketa George Oliver, City Manger

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL NORWALK CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON 4-30-15
(unabridged version)

Mayor Tom Phillips called the City Council meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. Present at roll call: Tom Greteman, Kyle Jackson and Jaki Livingston. Absent: Erika Isley and Eric Delker. (RC = roll call vote)

Staff present included: Marketa Oliver, City Manager; Tim Hoskins, Public Works Director; Dustin Huston, Fire Chief; Nancy Kuehl, Parks and Recreation Director; Holly Sealine, Library Director; Greg Staples, Police Chief; Wade Wagoner, Planning and Economic Development Director and Chris Campbell, Assistant Public Works Director.

City Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC) members present included:

Infrastructure

Newton Standridge
Dennis Isley
Judy McConnell
AJ Samuelson
Elisabeth Thompson

Public Safety

Dean Ahnen
Tommy Thompson
Elisabeth Thompson

15-066 Livingston moved, Jackson seconded to approve **agenda**. Voice vote carried unanimously.

15-067 Greteman moved, Livingston seconded to adopt **Resolution No. 0430-15-039 accepting public infrastructure for the subdivision of The Estates at the Ridge**. RC vote passed unanimously.

CIAC Presentations

Phillips thanked the committee members and told them he appreciates their work on these recommendations, that the mayor and council take them to heart.

Infrastructure

Newton Standridge said the Infrastructure CIAC committee found several things important. The City needs to purchase the Warren Rural Water customers. Those customers were annexed seven years ago and need to be on city services within the next three years. In conjunction with that is the proposal to loop the water system that will come in and connect at Beardsley and G14. This would bring in a trunk line off of Maffit down Orilla Road. It will take several million dollars. The idea is to have a loop system so that we will be protected if there are water issues. The City also needs to be mindful of our capacity and

look at the availability of irrigation and irrigation meters. He said the Warren Rural Water buyout does not give the City water capacity but adds customers.

Greteman said before the City starts buying more customers, we should be talking about capacity. Samuelson said it is important to aggressively pursue capacity any time it comes available. Oliver said it is important to note that the committee placed the highest priority by far on the water issues than other issues.

Standridge reported the committee's other top recommendation is to replace water mains on the south side of the City in a more timely manner. Oliver noted that Council had a project in the FY 16 budget that would address the first water main project. Standridge said the water main replacement schedule had been 25 years, but that needs to be expedited. It may end up coming to a bond issue.

Hoskins said the City's mains in that area are badly undersized. They are two and four inch mains, versus eight inch mains.

Greteman asked if the mains are all under the streets and Hoskins said no.

Hoskins added that there is no fire service in the area because we cannot hook onto the hydrants. Phillips clarified that the City has fire service in that area but water would have to be hauled in.

Standridge said the committee also looked at Beardsley from Highway 28 to the 50th street bridge and that needs to be a three lane to enhance the safety around the school as well as the turning on Highway 28. Greteman asked if the City has the right-of-way and Standridge said he believes so.

Greteman asked about Beardsley East. Standridge said that they think it could need four lanes. It could require some acquisition. Greteman asked why they prioritized Beardsley West over Beardsley East and Standridge said because of the elementary school.

Greteman said he understands the issue at Lakewood school and thinks what Chief Staples did, helped a lot; but it is 30 minutes twice a day. He said that is a lot of money to add a third lane for an hour to an hour and a half a day when it is a hundred times better than it was before the recent changes were made. Greteman would like to see traffic counts - peak traffic counts.

Standridge said the committee looked at the future development of High Road to line up with G14 at the curve and the type of infrastructure that will be needed to span the gullies.

Public Safety

Dean Ahnen thanked the committee members and distributed a Safety Committee summary.

He said the Fire priorities are:

- Another day person so that the Chief can focus on priorities;
- Finish the day room; and
- Minimum staffing of four people from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. seven days per week.

Ahnen noted that the Fire priorities also encompassed EMS responsibilities. He thanked the Council for taking steps to staff people in house on the weekend. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers, so it is important to start planning to go to a full-time department. They also recommend continued cooperation with West Des Moines in the future. There is a proposal at the State level that would require smaller departments like Martensdale to be attached administratively to a larger department. This could lead to more expense and responsibility for Norwalk.

Greteman asked if the committee looked at our boundaries for fire/EMS service, specifically regarding the incident on Wright Road, just east of Cherry. Ahnen said that was not addressed by the committee. Greteman would like them to think about that.

Huston said that every entity has to provide fire service, but a fire department can be whatever they determine it to be, therefore some fire districts have dropped to a very low level of service. Ahnen noted there is no requirement to furnish EMS. Huston said the State is looking at making EMS an essential service and allow taxing for it.

Greteman said the reason he wanted to add staff to weekend nights is that if someone calls an ambulance, twenty to thirty minutes is an intolerable amount of time to wait. The expectations of our residents is that if you call a police officer or fire fighter or ambulance, that help will arrive within three, four or ten minutes tops.

Ahnen said it was interesting to learn that most of the time, a police officer is the first responder to an EMS call. Chief Staples noted during committee meetings that is a unique situation to him. Ahnen said there is only one officer on duty every night from four to six a.m. and during the night shift also if there is an absence. There is no coverage if the officer has to transport to Indianola. This is a serious safety concern for the community and the officer. Chief Staples recommends the immediate addition of another officer.

The committee recommends beginning to fill the Public Safety staffing needs. The City Council and City Manager must proactively plan for funding these needs; and if necessary, consider the use of the franchise fee that would include a sunset clause. Greteman said the franchise fee was beat soundly but there was nobody really selling the issue. Ahnen said he voted against it the last time because it included the school and there was no one selling it.

Ahnen said both chiefs need to continue to voice their concerns about the needs. He said CIAC is a good program that should continue and thinks it is time for this community to become proactive instead of reactive. Ahnen said the committee structure should probably involve more city personnel. He added that Elisabeth Miller had a great suggestion for the police to work with kindergartners regarding "stranger danger", etc. Staples said they had been looking for a way to incorporate work with the kindergartners and agreed Miller had a great suggestion.

Standridge thanked public safety because if it were not for them, his son would be dead. Ahnen added the day after one of our committee meetings, one of the members had an emergency with his son and public safety was there immediately.

Trail Discussion

Wagoner presented the most recent bike trail map. One of the higher priorities is to connect to the Great Western Trail. Wagoner would like to see us get to a point where bicycles are an alternate method of transportation. As you design a great bike trail system, the real goal is to connect your neighborhoods as your city grows and get people to want to move around in something other than their vehicle. Also, as we move forward with addressing storm water through regional detention facilities, we see the opportunity to connect them with bike trails and have a system of greenways that are connected by bike trails.

Jackson asked if, as new developments come on line, are trail connections taken into account. Wagoner said yes. Also, quite frequently Cities will enter into an agreement where the City pays for the difference between making something a trail instead of a sidewalk.

Oliver noted that the comprehensive trail map was developed through a grant. Greteman said as a city, do we want a \$5 million bike trail master plan. Livingston said the money does not come from the same place. Trail systems are far more grant-funded than staffing for fire and police; this is a quality of life issue and we are growing to a point where people do not want to drive everywhere.

Greteman said he would be more comfortable with five year increments on the map. He does not want to adopt the plan and then have someone coming in asking why a certain segment is not constructed yet. Livingston said they have the ability to alter it.

Standridge said that going back many years it was their desire to have a bike trail north of Beardsley, also going out North Avenue from 17th east to Hunter. The idea was to connect it to the Great American Trail. Also, it was a major cost to put the trail in front of the nursing home. Greteman asked why it was not north of Beardsley and Standridge said the Department Of Transportation (DOT) would not let them at that time.

Phillips said this is a 20-30 year timeframe to get this constructed. Greteman does not think showing a bike path going north on Beardsley makes any sense because the DOT keeps telling us no. Jackson asked staff to look into the bike path going north from Beardsley before this comes to Council.

Mission, Vision and Values

Phillips said last March he sent a message to council and staff to talk about our values. Most good organizations have a mission and vision statement and those are based on the values. He took the information and put together some statements that he sent to department heads and worked on developing with them.

Phillips distributed draft Mission and Vision statements. Jackson said he thought Vision should be more about what we are aspiring to be. What really is our vision? What sets us apart from other cities?

Greteman said there are ways to state it with more vision. To him, Norwalk is the America I grew up believing in. That is what he wants it to be - a family-friendly, thriving community that cares. It is here in the statements. It just has to be dressed up a bit. Greteman suggested giving council a month to look at it and the put it on agenda for council discussion.

Fire Department Staffing Discussion

Oliver noted that during the first budget review session, the issue of additional EMS staff was addressed. Council Member Greteman brought up the idea of having additional night time staffing on the weekends and was very clear about not entertaining a proposal to finish the day room at a cost of \$150,000; and suggested using Murphy beds during a transitional period. The council then added money to the budget for the additional staffing.

Oliver said Chief Huston developed a staffing proposal. Huston said the proposal would be to have a paramedic and EMT-B on duty and a duty officer responding from home. They would work 12-hour shifts, from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

This model pays the employees six hours at their regular rate and six hours at minimum wage, unless the night crew is up for more than two hours, then they are paid their regular rate for the entire shift. Crew members could not go to the bunks until 9:30. These would be shifts that current members of the Fire Department could sign up to work. The cost would be approximately \$47,268 annually in general fund wages. Council had included \$51,538 in the budget to accomplish the additional coverage. Huston noted that to include this coverage, we had to have two separate sleeping spaces.

Huston continued and said if the City were to hire new people to fill those shifts; and have a 36-hour employee (who would be up all of the time.) A 36-hour employee would be considered full-time and we would be required to pay additional benefits. The cost for that model would be \$117,950.

Greteman asked if we could bring two people in at 6 p.m. and pay them for 4 up hours and then the rest would be down hours unless they were called out. Huston said the way he had structured it was easy administratively because these hours would all have to be calculated manually.

Huston said to accomplish the shift coverage by allowing our current people to sign up for the shifts, it would be preferable to finish the day room. He was sensitive to the need to do that without costing a great deal of money and has received many offers of help. For example, Hilsabeck Schacht Inc. has volunteered to do framing, blocking, drywall and insulation and acoustical ceilings for a significantly discounted rate. Also, Midwest Sprinkler would do sprinkler heads less expensively and Baker Mechanical offered to do the HVAC at no charge. Commonwealth Electric would do the electrical labor for no charge. Fire Department members had skills with wiring outlets, switches, laying carpet, doing paint and trim and plumbing and bathroom and kitchen work. Also, FEH who is working on the Library roof, has several buildings they are demolishing. They have offered us to pick up materials that we would want. The department could get fire-rated doors, light fixtures, etc. for nominal cost to the City. This estimate to finish the day room would not exceed \$41,286.

Greteman said coverage is being accomplished with existing staff. To do plan A, we have to spend the \$41,286. Huston said not necessarily. We could take an office up front and take an office from the Police Department and put a Murphy bed in that room.

Livingston asked who is in the office up front overnight and Huston said no one. She asked who was in the Police Department office and Staples said no one.

Greteman said he would like some insight. It does not seem to him that \$41,000 sounds like very much money to finish up the upstairs. What kind of value does that represent? If we finish the day room today by bidding it out, how much does that save us? If we agree to spend \$41,000 right now, it sounds like we would save \$100,000 over what we spend a few years from now. Huston said yes.

Greteman asked who is reviewing it to make sure that we are not violating state and federal codes. He does not want to spend \$41,000 and have people tell him later that we have to spend more money because we did not observe some code that meant it had to be built differently. Huston said that he has shown the plans to an architect and to our building inspector. The City is the entity responsible for residential and building code inspections.

Greteman said he wants to set aside the mechanical aspect and he is thinking more as a functional space for fire people and EMS people. Are we using up the entire space for just two bedrooms? Huston said they have it planned to build five bedrooms with the ability to build a sixth bedroom. Huston said that visiting other stations, knowing the code and what they have done, and working with multiple people's input to review they came up with the layout. Greteman would like to see the plan. His sense is that this is the way we should go. Huston agreed to email it to him.

Livingston said there are some other, more dire, needs. We are making the Library take out a loan for the roof. That is a dire need. Greteman responded that the City is facing finishing the day room because it will need that staffing; so, if there is opportunity to save this amount of money, the City should do it. He wants to look at the plan more in depth before making a decision.

Phillips asked if there is consensus to put these shifts on line. Livingston asked if the City budgets for full-time employees where they would go. Huston answered they would not sleep.

Huston noted that as responders are at the station more, during those down hours, staff will start doing more of the building maintenance and building chores; so as Norwalk grows, the City will realize some cost savings in those areas. He further stated that it is important to provide a transition to the Fire Department's current members. These shifts give them value because they can do more around the fire station.

Greteman said ultimately, the important factor is to decrease medical response times.

There was consensus to put the plan on the Council agenda for consideration.

15-068 Livingston moved, Greteman seconded to **adjourn** at 7:44 p.m. Voice vote carried unanimously.

Tom Phillips, Mayor

Attest:

Marketa George Oliver, City Manger